



Eat**Right** Ontario

# Food Choices

## When Money is Tight

## PLANNING **HEALTHY MEALS**

Planning meals for my family is hard when money is tight. How can I make it easier?

Planning your meals and snacks ahead of time is a good way to make sure you eat well and save money.



- **Start by planning your main meals for the week.** Choose some favourite meals.
- **Find new recipe ideas in cookbooks, magazines or on the web.** Go to the library or swap recipes with friends. Choose low cost recipes that use only a few ingredients and are easy to prepare.
- **Next, make a list** of breakfast and other meal and snack ideas.
- **Write your meal ideas on a calendar or on a chart.**
- **Make a shopping list** that includes the items you need for your meal ideas.

**Try these tips to help stretch your food dollar when you plan your menu:**

- Check food supplies in your fridge, freezer and cupboard to see what you can use in your menu.
- Check flyers for foods that are on sale. Plan meals around good buys.
- Plan meals that have less meat and more dried beans, peas, lentils, vegetables and grain products. For example try stir-fries, pastas, egg dishes, soups, casseroles and bean dishes.
- Cook your own meals at home when you can. Buy less prepared food.
- Make larger amounts of food and plan to use leftovers for lunches or suppers the next day. Add leftover vegetables, meats, fish, or poultry to salads, pastas, soups or spaghetti sauces.



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My family is busy. We spend a lot of money on restaurant meals and take out and prepared foods. What can we do to save money and time?

- **Prepare your meals at home more often.** Get the whole family involved in planning, shopping, preparing and clean up.
- **Bring lunches to work or school.** Pack lunches the night before.
- **Check to see if there is a nutrition program at your child's school.** These programs can help with breakfast, lunch or snacks.
- **Bring a thermos of coffee or tea from home** instead of going to coffee shops.
- **Pack healthy snacks when you go out.** For example, try fruit, nuts, granola bars, homemade muffins, crackers and cheese.



## Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- What are some ways to save money at the grocery store?
- What are some family-friendly, healthy and low-cost meal ideas?

Create your own menu plan on the EatRight Ontario web site at  
<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/MenuPlanner>

To find answers to your healthy eating questions or get more **Food Choices When Money is Tight** factsheets speak to a Registered Dietitian at EatRight Ontario at **1-877-510-510-2** (in Ontario) or visit [www.eatrightontario.ca/en/budget](http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/budget)

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## When Money is Tight

PLANNING HEALTHY MEALS

## OUR MENU

### Main Meal

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#### Sunday

Homemade stew and whole grain rolls

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#### Monday

Baked cabbage roll skillet supper\*

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#### Tuesday

Muffin tin meatloaf & vegetable quinoa salad

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#### Wednesday

Sweet chili tofu stir-fry and vermicelli\*

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#### Thursday

Leftover sweet chilli tofu stir-fry and vermicelli\*

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#### Friday

Tandoori haddock with mixed frozen vegetables and rice\*

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#### Saturday

Leftover tandoori haddock with mixed frozen vegetables and rice

### Other Meals and Snacks

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#### Breakfasts

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Fresh fruit & muffin

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Scrambled egg & toast

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Oatmeal with cinnamon & apple

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Smoothie

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#### Lunches

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Leftover stew and whole grain rolls

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Leftover cabbage rolls

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Egg salad dip with pita and raw vegetables

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#### Snacks

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Air-popped popcorn

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Mixed dry whole grain cereal and banana

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Carrot-apple salad

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\*Look for these recipes at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/recipes>



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Write your meal and snack ideas on this chart.

PLANNING HEALTHY MEALS

## OUR MENU

### Our Main Meal

Sunday

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Monday

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Tuesday

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Wednesday

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Thursday

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Friday

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Saturday

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### Other Meals and Snacks

Breakfasts

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Lunches

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Snacks

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